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The Sportsman's Stake

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IN
AGRICULTURAL
CONSERVATION



PA - 603

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM
AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



More Hunting, Fishing Areas Needed

Each year about a million more Americans get interested in hunting and fishing.

One man in five goes hunting. Fishing is even more popular with men and has a strong appeal to women as well as the younger set. More than one-third of American families, mostly from the city, are interested in fishing.

As our population expands we will have greater need for more hunting and fishing opportunities, more parks and playgrounds, and for open meadows and woodlands close to cities and towns where people can "get away" for the weekend.

Farmers can increase these opportunities through agricultural conservation. You as a "consumer" of recreation—or as a representative of an organization interested in outdoor activities—can help meet the need by talking to farmers and letting them know of your interest.

Conservation is everybody's business.

Agricultural Conservation Increases Fishing, Hunting

Farmers are our wildlife custodians. Privately-owned farm and timber lands provide 80 percent of the wildlife available for hunting, as well as much good fishing. Upland game birds, resident game animals, fish, and even the migratory ducks and geese, are part of the harvest on farms.

However, with more and more people turning to hunting and fishing, we run the chance of overloading the hunting and fishing areas on farms and woodlands.

That is why sportsmen are directly interested in agricultural conservation on private land.

Agricultural conservation on private land greatly increases and improves food, shelter and water for game and fish on the farm. Also, adequate conservation on farm land keeps silt out of adjacent lakes and streams, and improves them for fishing. In turn, these wildlife benefits increase hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.

These are ways the Agricultural Conservation Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture benefits non-farmers.

Farmers as Wildlife Custodians

Hunters and fishermen know that the best hunting and much good fishing is on farms where conservation practices have been installed.

Conservation farming with contour strips of grass and legumes alternating with row crops or small grain provides more edges and borders than rectangular fields covered by a single crop. Wildlife find food and cover in the grass and crops, and in the brush and shrubs along the edges of fields and woodlands.

Farm woodland conservation plantings, windbreaks, grasslands, and plantings to control gullies and hillside erosion are all good habitat for game. Quail, partridge, pheasant, grouse, rabbits, squirrels and deer find plenty of suitable habitat.

Farm ponds and wetlands are a rest and food haven for ducks and geese. Ducks like farm pond areas, even small ones, for raising their young. Both livestock water and wildlife-fish ponds provide fishing opportunities for many persons.

Stress Fish and Wildlife Benefits

Agricultural conservation is encouraging farmers to take a renewed interest in conservation of both direct and incidental benefit to fish and wildlife.

This is reflected in the attention given to wildlife benefits and practices in the Agricultural Conservation Programs in every agricultural county of the nation.

In reviewing and re-examining the program each year, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) Committees of farmers that run the ACP locally, work with all the people who share responsibility for the big conservation job, including groups interested in fish and wildlife conservation. Many times this review of the ACP

Farmers and

results in additional practices that are needed but on which little development has taken place.

Some practices in the ACP are carried out by farmers specifically for the development of wildlife food, water or cover. These include building ponds for game and fish, restoring or developing marshlands, converting croplands into wetlands, and food and cover plots and borders. Agencies of State and Federal Governments provide technical assistance for these practices.

Most measures that conserve soil, water and woodland, also provide food, water and cover for wildlife and ponds for fish. Among those are the establishment of grasslands, livestock water ponds, stripcropping, sod waterways, shelter belts, gully control, and forest tree and shrub planting.



All Conservation Costs Money

Often the resource conservation needed in the public interest is more than a farmer can do on his own, in his normal farming operation. Conservation farming is more than "just good farming." It includes protection for the public in both the short-run and the long-range future.

The Agricultural Conservation Program is an arrangement by which the public joins with farmers and woodland owners to share the cost of needed conservation measures that protect, improve and renew soil, water, woodland and wildlife resources on private land.

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The public stands about half the cost of carrying out approved conservation practices. The farmer stands the other half.

Over a million farmers and woodland owners a year increase their accomplishments in conservation farming through the incentives of the Agricultural Conservation Program.

Where Fish and Game Thrive

Fish and game thrive where farmers practice conservation that provides hidden nesting areas, various sources of food, excellent shelter, good runways, and a plentiful supply of water.

Among the many conservation measures that bring about such benefits to wildlife and fish, are seven of high importance. In just one recent year, the local ASC committees report that farmers and the ACP working together in a resource conservation partnership, made these accomplishments in the seven conservation practices.

9,828,000 acres of annual, summer and winter land cover.

2,860,000 acres of permanent type grassland established.

1,854,000 acres of existing land cover improved.

467,000 acres of stripcropping.

336,000 acres planted to trees.

41,600 livestock water ponds.

19,000 miles of sod waterways.

Such conservation work by farmers and the ACP is a tremendous benefit to fish and wildlife. It happens every year.

What to Look For

In selecting a place to hunt or fish, look for stripcropped fields, shrubs and trees and field borders, protected woodland, grasslands, farm

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ponds. and generally lush vegetation. Conservation practices such as these normally indicate good hunting and fishing.

Of course. the hunter or fisherman will want to check with the landowner and protect his property so that his land and water will continue to be available to hunters and fishermen.



Where land is posted with a "keep out" sign. there usually is a story behind that sign. It may involve a crop that can be damaged. Or it could be that somebody has left gates open or hurt livestock or otherwise created a nuisance. Permission to hunt and fish on private land is up to the landowner.

Hunting and fishing on land that is privately owned is a privilege. not a right. To enjoy this privilege. remember that the owner is making some sacrifice. even if only to provide the area for fish and game to grow. for you to enjoy your sport.

Probably every farmer enjoys having fish and wildlife on his place. This enjoyment is one of his compensations. He is a true conservationist—not only of soil and water. but of all outdoor life.

In this. the farmer and the true sportsman are as one.

Our Wildlife



Contour strip-cropping conserves soil and water. It also provides wildlife food and cover in the grass and crop strips, and in the shrubby growth along the many irregular edges and borders.



These two city hunters will find plenty of game birds on this farm because the farmer has provided adequate food and cover. Upland game is part of the harvest on farms, and these two nimrods are happy to pay a fair price for part of the farmer's wildlife crop.



These quail raised on the farm will be released for hunting. On most farms where fish and wildlife have become a primary enterprise, agricultural conservation helped the farmers make adjustments in land use.



This field border of grass, shrubs and trees provides food, shelter and habitat.



A border-like strip for upland game in open woodland. This food plot will produce seed for birds to eat next winter.



Ducks and geese found this fenced farm pond a good resting place. They will stay awhile because food and protected water are abundant.



Most farmers stock their ponds with fish. A properly built and maintained farm pond will produce from 100 to 400 pounds of fish per acre per year.



Conservation plantings and spring development converted eroding, useless land into a real habitat. Ducks, pheasant, grouse and deer frequent this 30 acres of trees and bushes. Springs furnish wildlife water and fill nearby ponds stocked with fish.



Ponds for livestock water, constructed in pastures or on rangeland, make it easier to distribute livestock evenly over large areas. This prevents overgrazing, trampling or destruction of the grass cover. They are good for swimming, too.



In the velvet is this deer in well-grassed woodland.



If this ring-necked pheasant could talk, he'd brag about his farm habitat with food and cover in abundance.



Game birds thrive on the food and shelter in the lush grass found in many sod waterways. If this natural drainage way were plowed and cultivated it would become a gully.



After three years, these plantings changed the land pattern from raw gully into excellent wildlife habitat.



In this wildlife pond surrounded by grass, trees and shrubs, fish, birds and small animals find the food, cover, water and protection they need to live and thrive. The younger set likes it as a recreation spot.



A ranch reservoir doubles as a popular recreation and picnicking area.



Trees planted on a bare hillside five years before, already protect the land from erosion and will eventually produce lumber. Young woodlands, with grass on the ground, provide wildlife food and habitat, good hunting areas for sportsmen. In a few years, such woodlands will provide camping sites and hiking trails.



A good cover of grass and legumes "ties down" the soil to keep it from washing or blowing away. Grass keeps the water from rushing down the slopes during heavy rains. The slower moving water reaches creeks and rivers, or downstream reservoirs, clean and un-muddied. This helps keep our streams and reservoirs clean. The same grass also provides a home and food for quail, pheasants and rabbits.



Farmers and Stockmen are The Custodians of Our Wildlife

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